

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council  
Smyrna Rest Stop  
5500 DuPont Highway  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
Meeting Minutes  
January 14, 2019  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Suzanne Howell, Chair; Darryl Garner, Vice Chair; Kevin McAllister, Member; Alice Coleman, Member; Sonya Lawrence, Member; Dale Matusevich, Member; Patricia Burrell, Member.

**Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI):** Sandra Miller, Deputy Director; Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations; Deb Bradl, Sr. Social Services Administrator; Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist.

**Teleconference:** Jacqueline Poquette, Member.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2018 and December 10, 2018 were approved.

**Old Business:**

**VRAC Retreat and Town Hall Meeting:** VRAC members discussed a retreat to be held March 15 & 16 or March 22 & 23. Retreat goals were discussed and a draft agenda and proposal will be forwarded to DVI to explore resources.

**Elections:** Nominations were sent to Sonya Lawrence for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Official nominations that were accepted were Darryl Garner for Chair and Suzanne Howell for Vice Chair. The Chair opened nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor and the Chair closed the nominations. Sonya Lawrence moved to accept the current candidate slate of Darryl Garner for the Chair and Suzanne Howell for the Vice Chair. Alice Coleman seconded the motion. A vote was held and the Council unanimously voted for Darryl Garner for the Chair and Suzanne Howell for the Vice Chair.

Darryl Garner was elected Chair and Suzanne Howell was elected Vice Chair.

**2017 – 2018 Annual Reports:** The Council asked for updates on the 2017 and 2018 Annual Reports which are being completed by DVI. The Council decided that going forward they will complete the annual report. The Council will create a standing agenda item for the annual report items and the minutes should reflect these items and discussion.

The 2017 annual report and CSNA were submitted to the RSA and the Governor's office.

**New RSA Contact:** There is a new RSA contact. Deb Bradl will provide the contact information to the Council.

**Meeting schedule:** The Council discussed meeting bi-monthly and decided to continue to meet monthly. There is much to be discussed and bi-monthly meetings are not sufficient.

**Sub-committees:** At the February 11, 2019 meeting the Council will determine what sub-committees are needed.

Jill Morrison, Division for the Visually Impaired, will provide Darryl Garner with a list on Council positions vacant and filled.

**Administrator's Report:**

- Current caseload is 244.
- Total individuals employed is 10.
- Successful closures for individuals employed more than 90 days is 2.
- Successful closures for individuals employed less than 90 days is 8.
- Individuals ready to work is 37.
- Transitions youth age 14-21 is 70.
- Transitions youth age 14-24 is 90.

Council requested that Administrator's report be sent out in advance so the Council has a chance to review the numbers prior to the meeting.

Council suggests that there should be a set of expectations for children aged 11, 12 and 13 to prepare them for Pre-ETS services. Goals are on the IEP.

Council would like to hear about what factors impact employed individuals working for 90 days or 180 days.

Council would like a report on survey results and reports on satisfaction surveys.

**Director's report:**

**Blind Entrepreneurs Program:** On Wednesday December 5, 2018, Division leadership, members of the BEP and Blind Vendors Committee, and Laura Saperstein, Division of Public Health Physical Activity Nutrition and Obesity Prevention (PANO) Program Administrator conducted their quarterly Healthy Vending Initiative meeting. Topics of discussion included the recent taste-testing marketing conducted at several state building locations. Survey results were positive.

The Healthy Vending analysis shows a 14% increase in sales from this time period last year.

The contract with Delaware Technical Community College for cafeteria and catering services ended on December 14, 2018. The BEP Smyrna Rest Stop Gift Shop ceased operations on December 31, 2018.

**ILS:** In December a holiday crafts workshop was held at the Biggs Building and at the Annex in Milford. There was one participant.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:** On December 5, 2018, the Division sponsored an open house to mark the beginning of their partnership with other entities for the Governor's initiative of bringing more services to the City of Wilmington at the Porter State Service Center. A Division Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a Vocational Rehabilitation Business Consultant will be on-site at the Porter State Service Center every Wednesday. They will provide employment information, community resources and support systems which are needed for blind and visually impaired consumers.

**Education/Orientation and Mobility:** One of our visually impaired students was recognized as student of the month.

**Transition Conference:** The Conference had 850 attendees. There were students that opened up the sessions and introduced presenters. One of the Division for the Visually Impaired's students was a presenter at the Conference.

**Job openings at DVI:** DVI is recruiting TVIs as well as one VR Counselor and one Transition Counselor. Council asked what new steps is the Division for the Visually Impaired engaging in to fill the vacant positions. The Division for the Visually Impaired brings in interns to expose them to the visually impaired community in the hope that they will gain interest in working with this community. TVIs now receive student loan forgiveness.

Council asked what steps have been taken to develop relationships with the operators of the new building being built at the Wilmington Riverfront to develop opportunities for DVI consumers. Sandra Miller will look to see what outreach has been done regarding this location and jobs available at this location.

Council asked for the number of consumers who have been in VR long-term. Council also asked what factors are contributing to the long-term involvement in the program to determine how to best advise the Division for the Visually Impaired on ways to resolve these issues.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Edmondson

Administrative Specialist I

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